

Verse

To Zoltán Kallós†

LÁSZLÓ FÓRIZS

*The woman who was built into the wall*¹

Human and/or animal sacrifice prior to or during the construction of altars, fortresses, temples, other buildings or bridges is widespread not only in the Indo-European folklore but also in the Hungarian folk songs and ballads. In addition to the Rumanian,² Bulgarian, Serbian, Albanian, Georgian, Greek, Danish, etc. examples,³ many Turkic and Chinese parallels can be found. This practice occurred all over Eurasia. It is also the main theme of our ballad that belongs to the most ancient stratum of the Kőműves Kelemen ballad-complex. The text was preserved by oral tradition in the remote Csángó territory of Moldva. It was collected by Zoltán Kallós in Klézse in 1955 and published in his excellent collection (Kallós 1974). In the present article, which is the first part of a series, the author gives a short introduction and a translation of the ballad, and pays his highest tribute to Zoltán Kallós.⁴

Introduction

Folk music research in academic terms began with the collecting trips of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály in 1905–1906.⁵ Their research culminated in Bartók 1924 and Kodály 1937,⁶ and led to the following impressions:

1 In an accompanying paper *The Ritual Construction of Time. On the origin of constructing rituals/sacrifices – A comparative analysis* the author will examine the ballad and the available sources in more detail and argues that behind the usual psychological reading of the text traces of an ancient cosmogonic ritual and creation myth glimmer into sight.

2 Cf. the ballad-complex of Master Manole (Rum. Meșterul Manole).

3 See Vargyas 1959.

4 I would like to thank to Natália Borza, Viktor Farkas, Beate V. M. Guttandin, András Róna-Tas, John Zemke and to my wife and son for their interest, valuable suggestions and comments.

5 We should also mention the phonograph collection of Béla Vikár at the end of the 19th century. It is very important to note that Vikár turned directly to the peasants for their songs; and in spite of the fact that he was not a musician, he made precise transcriptions and tried to capture even the nuances of the performance. He also collected folk dialects and folk poetry and was interested in ballad research, too.

6 Their scientific attitude can be characterized by the following quotation: „In the past, the fabrication of theories on insufficient and deficient material was common practice in our scientific life. How much mistakenly published material had to be reedited! Even the brightest theory collapses under the burden of one single new finding, like a house of cards. Theories become outdated, but flawlessly edited material never does.” Kodály 1952.

„Today, the Magyars represent the outermost edge of that great Asiatic musical tradition, many thousands of years old, rooted in the spirit of the various peoples who live from China, throughout Central Asia, to the Black Sea.” (Szabolcsi 1935)

„Hungarian folk music today is still based on its primitive foundations... Time may have wiped away the Eastern features from the face of the Magyar community, but in the depth of its soul, where the springs of music lie, there still lives an element of the original East, which links it with peoples whose language it has long since ceased to understand, and who are today so different in mind and spirit. After exposure to so many foreign influences ... it is amazing that the original musical language of the Magyar community has remained almost intact in at least several hundred tunes. It seems likely that this will continue to remain so.” (Kodály 1937)

The etnomusicological research initiated by the two geniuses significantly deepened and expanded in the following decades. The collection work of Imre Olsvai covered the whole of South Transdanubia; but the „discovery” of the Csángós of Moldavia was even more significant. The new developments have been thoroughly analyzed by Lajos Vargyas in his *Folk Music of the Hungarians* (Vargyas 1981)⁸, where he describes the situation as follows:

„The Csángós of Moldavia, who live beyond the Hungarian borders, were discovered twice, first by Pál Péter Domokos in the interwar years and then by Zoltán Kallós and the fellows of the Folklore Institute in Cluj. Discoveries continued with the music of Hungarians in Mezőség, then a part of the tradition of the Gyimes Csángós. These areas provided sol-pentatonic tunes, ancient types of narrow range, very rich traditional dance music, archaic instrumental styles, Hungarian variants of the so-called Bulgarian rhythm, specific formal developments in the “jaj-songs” of Mezőség, peculiar performing and voice producing characteristics.”⁹ (Vargyas 1981)

7 „Basic concepts of musical thought may develop along similar lines among different peoples completely separated from each other. In this way the pentatonic system developed among peoples without mutual contact — African Negroes, North-American Indians, Celts, Chinese, etc. Essential correspondence in melodic construction, phraseology and rhythm, however, is far from accidental. Here, contact or common origin must be assumed. Since such basic elements are found to exist among both Magyars and the existing remnants of Oriental communities from which at some stage the Magyars were derived, it can only be assumed that common elements existed in the community before the Magyars broke away. The Magyars brought them from their old homeland as part of their ancient heritage, along with their language. Today, the Magyars represent the outermost edge of that great Asiatic musical tradition, many thousands of years old, rooted in the spirit of the various peoples who live from China, throughout Central Asia, to the Black Sea.” Kodály 1952. This kind of affinity and nostalgia could be found in the life of the famous Hungarian Tibetologist, Alexander Csoma de Körös who studied Sanskrit as a preliminary exercise to help him to find our Eastern Homeland.

8 This work can be treated as the third major synthesis in the field that combines Bartók’s descriptive, typological account with Kodály’s historical, comparative analyses.

9 It is worth noting that this kind of musicoarcheology could reach farther than the analysis based merely on linguistic data: „[T]he predilection for pentatonic melodies in the Americas, East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Urals/Hungary and folk traditions of India, Iran, and western Central Asia or among the berbers points to a rather old phenomenon that may perhaps be linked to the spread of populations during the warm period around 40kya. Obviously, this wide area overlaps with linguistic data only in part, but genetic data would agree more.” Witzel 2012: 269.

Our ballad, *Kelemen*¹⁰ the Stonemason – *The woman who was built into the wall* / *I* (*Kőműves Kelemen – A falba épített asszony / I*), belongs to the most ancient stratum preserved by oral tradition in the remote Csángó territory of Moldva. It was collected by Zoltán Kallós in Klézse (Bákó megye, Moldva)¹¹ in 1955 and was labelled as Ballad #1 in his excellent collection *Book of Ballads*.¹² This ballad was sung by Miklós Gyurkáné Szályka Rózsa¹³, who is one of the most important singers in the collection.¹⁴ Together with her daughter, Miklós Erzse¹⁵, they are the source of 23 ballads.¹⁶ Two other versions of the ballad are also included in the book (#2 and #3).¹⁷

Details of the collection

In Kallós 1974 the ballads are arranged according to their genres. The collection contains three extensive and useful “Appendices” as follows:

I. Notes

General notes about the editorial work

Notes to the ballads

Glossary

List of collection points, singers and recorded pieces¹⁸

II. Music scores¹⁹

III. Musical Index.

10 Note that the name Kelemen does not occur in the text of the ballad at all, but it occurs in both of the other versions in the collection, where we also learn that Kelemen is the thirteenth stonemason. It is explicit in Ballad #3: „Összetanakodott tizenkét kőműves, / Az tizenharmadik Kelemen kőműves.” (v1), „Jó napot, jónapot, tizenkét kőműves! / Az tizenharmadik Kelemen kőműves.” (v4), „Elindula haza tizenkét kőműves, / Az tizenharmadik Kelemen kőműves.” (v9); and implicit in Ballad #2: „Jó napot. jónapot, / Tizenkét kőműves!” / “Naked is jó napot, / Kelemen kőműves!” Kallós 1974: 10–12. In fact, the name Kelemen, or its variants, occurs in almost all of the other collected versions of the ballad. For more details of the whole ballad-complex, see Vargyas 1960.

11 Rum. Cleja, județul Bacău, [old] Moldova.

12 Hung. *Balladák könyve*. Kallós 1974: 7–9.

13 Born in 1894. (In the names of the singers I followed the usual Hungarian order, i.e., surname (family name) comes first.)

14 She sang these songs in the collection of Kallós: 1, 6, 12, 21, 37, 42, 44, 68, 94, 108, 122, 128, 137, 184, 223, 231, 235, 244, 245 (ibid.: 467).

15 Born in 1926. Her ballads in the collection: 219, 227, 254, 259 (ibid.: 467).

16 Ibid.: 467. Other singers from the same village and their songs: Molotás Györgyné Kádár Erzse (1914): 10, 77; Lőrinc Györgyné Hodorog Luca (1922): 5, 78, 126, 181, 224; Szabó Erzse (1942): 11. Note that all the songs came from woman singers in Klézse.

17 Ibid.: 10–12. Both of them were recorded in Mezőszék. One of them (#2) was sung by Tóbiás Jánosné Varró Máriskó in Válaszút, in 1956; the other (#3) by Szőlősi Daniné Fodor Mari in Visa, in 1969 (ibid.: 469).

18 After the name of the settlement comes that of the singer. Her/his year of birth is given in parentheses. The number that marks the place of her/his ballad in the book is given finally.

19 Note that no score is given for the ballad Kaliman the Stonemason, but both ballad #2 and #3 do have a music score at the end of the book (ibid.: 473–474).

The ballad in old (Csángó) Hungarian and its English translation

A falba épített asszony

1.
Ud rakják, ud rakják
Magas Gyivó várát,
Magas Gyivó várát
Tizenkét kömijes.
2.
Kit éjen felraktak,
A nappal mind lehúll,
S kit nappal felraktak,
Az éjen mind lehúll.
3.
Legnagyobb kömijes,
Azt a törvént tevő:
„Kinek hamarabb jó
Asszon felesége,
4.
Azt rakjuk be ide,
Háha megállana,
Háha megállana
Magos Gyivó vára.”
5.
Legnagyobb kömjesné
Azt az álmod látá,
Kerek udvarának
Kerek közepibe
6.
Vér kút fakad vala,
Vér kút fakad vala.
Ő es csak felkele,
Felszóval kiájtá:
7.
„Szolgám, édes szolgám,
Hámba e lovakat,
Hámba e lovakat,
Hogy induljunk útnak!”

The woman who was built into the wall

1.
Up they pile, up they pile
High Stronghold of Gyivó
High Stronghold of Gyivó
Twelve stonemasons working.
2.
What they piled in the night
Collapsed within the day.
What they piled in the day
Collapsed within the night.
3.
The greatest stonemason
Made the following law:
„That woman who comes first
Of our wives to this place
4.
Must be built in the wall,
So we hope it would stand
So we hope it would stand
High Stronghold of Gyivó.”
5.
Then the greatest one's wife
Saw a vision in sleep:
From the circled center
of her round courtyard
6.
A bloodwell had arisen,
A bloodwell had arisen.
The vision wakes her up
And she shouts, loudly shouts:
7.
„Servant, my dear servant,
Harness six [white] horses
Harness six [white] horses
Let us leave straight away.”

8.

„Ne menjünk, ne menjünk,
Met nem lesz jó dolgunk.”

„Szolgám, édes szolgám,
Hat ló s hintó zenyém,

9.

Hat ló s hintó zenyém,
S ez ostor e tihid.”

Felszóval kiáltá:

„Szolgám, édes szolgám,

10.

Szolgám, édes szolgám,

Hámba e lovakat,

Hogy induljunk útnak!”

S ő es behámolá.

11.

Útnak indulának

Magos Gyivó várja.

Legnagyobbik kőmjés

Messzünnet meglátta.

12.

„Tér meg, asszon, tér meg,
Met nem lesz jól dolgod.”

„Térjünk meg, térjünk meg,
Met nem jóra menünk.”

13.

„Istenem, Istenem,

Rendelj eleikbe,

Rendelj eleikbe

Három fene farkast!”

14.

Rendele az Isten,

S mégse térének meg.

„Térjünk meg, térjünk meg,

Met nem jóra menünk.”

8.

„We had better not go,
‘cause we shall come to grief.”

„Servant, my dear servant,
Coach and horses are mine,

9.

Coach and horses are mine,
Only this whip is yours.”

And she shouts, loudly shouts:

„Servant, my dear servant,”

10.

„Servant, my dear servant,

Harness six [white] horses,

Let us leave straight away.”

Six horses are harnessed.

11.

They started their road

To Gyivó's High Stronghold.

The Greatest stonemason

Caught sight of his own wife.

12.

„Turn away, oh woman,

‘cause you shall come to grief.”

„Let us turn, turn away,

‘cause this way is not right.”

13.

„Oh my God, oh my God,

Please, command to stop them,

Please, command to stop them

Three big wolves, dreadful wolves.”

14.

The command had been made,

But they didn't turn away.

„Let us turn, turn away,

‘cause this way is not right.”

15.

„Istenem, Istenem,
Rendelj eleikbe,
Rendelj eleikbe
Ed nad tüzes esőt!”

16.

Rendele az Isten,
S mégse térének meg.
„Térjünk meg, térjünk meg,
Met nem jóra menünk.”

17.

Kezével es inté,
Szájával es mondá:
„Tér meg, asszon, tér meg,
Met nem lesz jól dolgod.”

18.

„Térjünk meg, térjünk meg,
Met nem jóra menünk!”
„Hat ló s hintó zenyém,
S ez ostor e tihid!”

19.

Csak oda érének,
Hol tizenkét kömjés
Ud rakják, ud rakják
Magos Gyivó várát.

20.

Őt es csak elfogák,
Neki vérét vevék,
Neki vérét vevék,
E meszes cseberbe.

21.

Őt es rakni kezdék
Magos Gyivó várba.
Térgyéig felrakták,
Akkor es megkérdi:

15.

„Oh my God, oh my God,
Please, command to stop them,
Please, command to stop them
A frightful firestorm.”

16.

The command had been made,
But they didn't turn away.
„Let us turn, turn away,
'cause this way is not right.”

17.

His hands waving in vain,
His mouth speaking in vain,
„Turn away, oh woman,
'cause you shall come to grief.”

18.

„Let us turn, turn away,
'cause this way is not right.”
“Coach and horses are mine,
Only this whip is yours.”

19.

They arrived at the place
Where the twelve stonemasons
Were piling, piling up
High Stronghold of Gyivó.

20.

Finally, she was caught.
All of her blood was put
All of her blood was put
Into the lime bucket.

21.

They started to build her
Into the High Stronghold.
Piling it to her knee,
When she asked from the men:

22.

„Tréfa-e vaj való,
Tizenkét kömijes?”
„ Való, asszon, való,
Urad tette törvént.”

23.

Hunnyállyig felrakták,
Akkor es megkérde:
„Tréfa-e vaj való,
Tizenkét kömijes?”

24.

„Való, asszon, való,
Urad tette törvént.”
Őt es csak béfejkik
E feje teteig.

25.

Előbbször befedték
Szép faragott kövel,
Tetejét befedték
Faragatlan kövel.

26.

Ők es csantatának
Zsendelyből szárnyakat,
Tizenkét kömijes
Mind lerepülének.

27.

Mind lerepülének,
Mind haza menének.
Onnat le repültek,
Házájukba mentek.

28.

Legnagyobb kömijes
Fődre leborula,
Fődre leborula,
Haláláig sira.

22.

„Is this a joke or real?
Tell me, twelve stonemasons?”
„Oh woman, it is real,
Thy husband made the law.”

23.

It had been piled up to
Her armpit, then she asked:
„Is this a joke or real?
Tell me, twelve stonemasons?”

24.

„Oh woman, it is real,
Thy husband made the law.”
They finished the piling
To the top of her head.

25.

First, she was covered with
Beautiful hewed stone
Then the top was covered
With a rough unhewn stone.

26.

Shingle wings for themselves
Were commanded to make
So the twelve stonemasons
Flew away flew away.

27.

From the standing stronghold
To their houses they went
Far away now ahigh
To their home they all flew.

28.

The greatest stonemason
Did fall upon his knees
Did fall upon his knees
Till his death he did cry.

Abbreviations

<i>AAntH</i>	Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae
<i>AEthn</i>	Acta Ethnographia
<i>AOH</i>	Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae
<i>Ethn</i>	Ethnographia/Népelet
<i>IJ</i>	Indo-Iranian Journal
<i>JA</i>	Journal Asiatique
<i>JRAS</i>	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
<i>MNy</i>	Magyar nyelv

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